



UNIVERSITY  
*of* ALASKA  

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*Many Traditions One Alaska*

## **Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools 2013**

Prepared for the 28<sup>th</sup> Alaska State Legislature

In Accordance with:

AS 14.40.190(b)

Source: Senate Bill 241, 25th Alaska State Legislature

AN ACT

A report to the legislature on teacher preparation, retention, and recruitment by the  
Board of Regents of the University of Alaska

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## Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools 2013

### Executive Summary

This report responds to AS 14.40.190(b), which requires the University of Alaska (UA) Board of Regents to report biennially to the Alaska State Legislature on university efforts to “attract, train and retain qualified public school teachers.” It describes the University of Alaska teacher education programs, provides data on teacher education graduates, discusses initiatives across the system to encourage more youth and adults to enter teaching, and describes efforts to mentor and support educators prepared both within and outside the UA system. It also describes some of the research being done on challenges in meeting the state’s needs and to attract, prepare, and retain educators for Alaska. The report then addresses a recent question the Legislature raised about why some of the UA teacher education graduates are not currently teaching in Alaska’s public schools.

- The three UA Schools and College of Education produced 242 new teachers in AY 2012. Fourteen of these were new special education teachers. In addition another 66 certified teachers earned special education endorsements.
- UA programs produced 80 principals and 34 counselors. 171 degrees were awarded in other educational areas such as superintendent certification, master teachers, educational technology, reading specialist and so forth.
- School districts continue to hire around 400 teachers each year from outside of Alaska.
- All three UA education programs engage in efforts to recruit and prepare more rural educators.
- The UA Schools and College of Education each run initiatives aimed at increasing the number of Alaska Native teachers.
- All of the UA Schools and College of Education offer programs that prepare new and practicing teachers from urban Alaska and outside the state for working in rural, remote and indigenous communities.
- The UA Statewide Office of K-12 Outreach also is engaged in efforts to recruit teacher candidates, provide professional development to current teachers and mentor new teachers from both within and outside Alaska.
- Education faculty across the three Schools and College of Education and researchers at the UAA Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR) are conducting research on critical issues of practice and policy including studies of teacher evaluation, teacher turnover in rural and remote Alaska, and culturally responsive mathematics teaching.
- In response to legislators’ questions in 2012, the UA Schools and College of Education and CAEPR explored why many UA teacher education graduates were not teaching immediately after graduation. The major reasons include too many graduates competing for the limited positions in the state’s largest districts and too few willing or able to relocate to rural and remote schools where districts need more applicants. Other factors include: some graduates are less prepared to teach than others, more UA students choose to study elementary education than there are elementary teacher openings in schools, and too few choose hard-to-fill areas such as special education, secondary math, and secondary physical science.



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## Introduction

In 2008, Alaska Governor Sarah Palin signed into law AS 14.40.190(b), which requires the University of Alaska Board of Regents to present to the Alaska State Legislature a report that “describes the efforts of the university to attract, train, and retain qualified public school teachers. The report must include an outline of the university's current and future plans to close the gap between known teacher employment vacancies in the state and the number of state residents who complete teacher training.” This report has been prepared annually since 2009; as of this iteration it will become a biennial report, provided to the legislature no later than day 30 of the regular session, per AS 14.40.190(b).

Teacher preparation is central to the mission of the University of Alaska (UA) system. In 2010, the UA Board of Regents endorsed the UA Teacher Education Plan (Appendix C) which established priorities for fulfilling this mission. Under President Gamble's leadership, the system is engaged in an organizational change effort called the “Strategic Direction Initiative” (SDI). The SDI is aimed at increasing the UA system's ability to meet the needs of students and the state and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. (<http://www.alaska.edu/shapingalaskasfuture/what-is-sdi/>)

The five Strategic Direction (draft) themes are:

- Student Achievement and Attainment
- Productive Partnerships with Alaska's Schools
- Productive Partnerships with Alaska's Public and Private Industries
- Research and Development to Build and Sustain Alaska's Economic Growth
- Accountability to the People of Alaska

The theme “Productive Partnerships with Alaska's Schools” is of particular importance for this report. The theme includes three broad areas: Alignment, Teachers for Alaska's Schools, and Rural Education. Alignment includes issues around supporting and strengthening secondary preparation of students for postsecondary education; Teachers for Alaska's Schools addresses recruitment of young people into the teaching profession, preparation of teachers in the UA system, and induction and mentoring for new teachers; and Rural Education looks at the role UA can play in improving the educational achievement of rural students so that, among other achievements, they qualify for the Alaska Performance Scholarship and do not need remediation once they enter the postsecondary system.

This report primarily covers the issues under “Teachers for Alaska's Schools.” The report does describe some of the UA Schools and College of Education efforts around improving alignment and rural education, but the main focus here is on the topics of recruiting, preparing and supporting K-12 educators. After documenting some of the shortage areas in the Alaska teaching workforce and a discussion of difficulties in staffing Alaska's schools, we describe the UA teacher education programs, provide data on teacher education graduates from the University of Alaska, discuss initiatives across the system to encourage more youth and adults to enter teaching, and describe

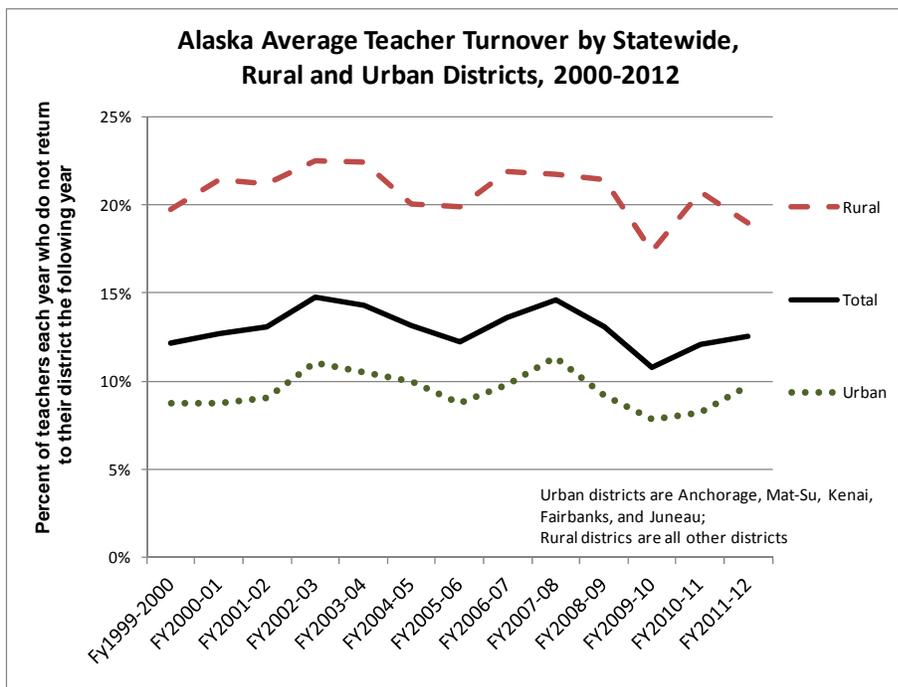
efforts to mentor and support educators prepared both within and outside the UA system. We also describe some of the research being done on the challenges of attracting, preparing, and retaining school teachers and educators for Alaska. Finally, the report addresses a recent question the Legislature raised about why some of the UA teacher education graduates are not teaching in the public schools. Subsequent reports will address additional specific issues of concern in depth, from the effectiveness of teacher induction and mentoring efforts across the state to the cost of teacher turnover.

## What are the needs and challenges in staffing Alaska's schools?

Staffing schools in Alaska has been a challenge since territorial days. The living conditions and remoteness of many communities, and the distance of the state from elsewhere in the United States have made it difficult to hire and retain educators—both from within Alaska and from outside the state. Educational institutions within the state have never produced enough teachers to meet the annual placement needs of schools. In this section, we address some of the contemporary issues around teacher preparation, recruitment and retention. A more complete discussion of these issues will be available in an upcoming report on teacher turnover, supply and demand from the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR).

### Teacher Turnover

As the chart below shows, turnover in rural Alaska school districts is a persistent problem. Although there has been a slight decline over the last decade, rural districts still average almost double the turnover of Alaska's five largest, urban districts—about 19% compared to just under 10% for the urban districts. Appendix A includes turnover numbers for each district each year from AY 1999-2000 to AY 2011-2012. The dip in turnover between 2008 and 2009 may be related to the nation's financial crisis; districts across the country were either not hiring or were laying off teachers, and this may have led teachers with jobs in Alaska to stay in those jobs longer than they might if they thought there were readily available options elsewhere.



The causes of the high teacher turnover are complex and varied. Among them are that teachers recruited from the Lower 48 are far from their homes and families; the remoteness of many rural communities is difficult for some; there are limited choices for housing and medical care in villages

and urban amenities (such as supermarkets, restaurants, and so on) are generally not available; teachers are not always prepared for the differences between their culture and that of the communities in which they teach; and there are difficulties associated with teaching in schools with a history of high poverty rates and low student achievement.

Districts across the state consistently report challenges recruiting and keeping special education teachers and related service providers such as occupational therapists and speech-language pathologists. Teacher data collected by the state each year provides information on special education teacher turnover. From the 2010-11 school year to the 2011-12 school year, about 13% of general education teachers did not return to a general education position in their district; but 21% of special education teachers did not return to a special education position in their district. In rural Alaska, special educator turnover was 31%, compared to 19% for teachers who were not in special education<sup>1</sup>.

Similar data is not available for related services positions, but in a 2009 survey of school districts about speech-language pathologists, districts reported contracting for those services rather than hiring for them because they could not compete with private sector wages and because there were not enough specialists available to hire. They reported difficulties finding even contract services within the state and in some cases contracted with firms in the lower 48, or used telepractice to provide services.

Teacher turnover is defined as the percent of teachers in a given year who do not return to teach the following year in their same district. This is a useful definition when we analyze ways that districts can better retain their teachers. However, when we consider district efforts to recruit new teachers, we need to look at how many teachers districts have to hire; that is, how many of a given year's teachers were not in the district the previous year. Two factors can make hiring and turnover numbers different. First, if teacher needs are changing (due to enrollment changes, budget constraints or other factors), then districts may have to hire more teachers (to fill new positions) or fewer (as positions are reduced) than the number that leave. The total number of Alaska public school teachers has both increased and decreased in recent years. Second, if teachers leave the classroom to go into administration, then districts have to hire new teachers to fill those positions. Alaska districts hire many of their administrators from within; Alaska's districts typically have to hire 50 to 100 teachers to replace those moving into administrative positions.

Each year, Alaska school districts recruit not only within Alaska, but at job fairs and universities across the country, both in collaboration with UA Alaska Teacher Placement (described below) and on their own. There is some research showing that teachers prepared in state are more likely to stay, especially in rural areas, but rural districts report being able to recruit only a small fraction of their teacher needs from Alaska teacher education programs. Each year, for the last three years, districts have hired just under 1100 teachers; about half of those (504 of 1085) have been experienced teachers, already in Alaska. Some (about 140) changed districts from the previous year, over 20% (about 220) have taught in Alaska public schools before but took one or more years

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<sup>1</sup> Unpublished ISER analysis, EED certified staff accounting database

away; and some (about 140) are experienced teachers already in Alaska, but have not taught here before. Districts hired about 210 new teacher Alaskans – this includes both Alaska-prepared teachers and Alaskans who went to schools outside the state for their teacher preparation. This left districts still needing to hire about 370 teachers from out of state; about 40% of those already had one or more years in the classroom, and about 60% were new teachers.

Alaska School Districts' Teacher Hiring by Prior Alaska and Teaching Experience Average, FY2009-2012			
	Experienced teachers	New teachers	Total
Alaskans	504	211	715
Non-Alaskans	153	217	370
Total	658	428	1085

#### Induction and Mentoring for New Teachers

Districts have worked to recruit and retain effective teachers through improved induction and mentoring, loan forgiveness and other financial incentives, and professional development aimed at improving teacher effectiveness. These programs have had varying degrees of success over the years. Districts and the state have implemented a number of induction and mentoring programs to help prepare new-to-Alaska teachers for the challenges of teaching in Alaska, especially in rural Alaska. However, many of these initiatives have been funded through federal grants and are not sustained when the funding disappears. Also, there has not been systematic research on which models are most successful across the state. As is described below there is now a comprehensive evaluation of the Statewide Teacher Mentoring project underway; this will address some of the gaps in knowledge about what works in Alaska.

#### One Challenge in Recruiting Teachers from Within Alaska: The Pool of Potential Candidates

One reason Alaska has trouble “growing our own” is that too many of our students don’t graduate from high school, and of those who do too many don’t go on to college. While Alaska’s high school graduation rates have improved over the last decade, the state graduate rate is still in the bottom quarter of states (NCES Digest of Education statistics 2011, Table 113, averaged freshman graduation rates 1990-91 through 2008-09). Both the percent of our high school graduates who attend college and the percent who attend here in their home state are in the bottom few states. So for every one hundred ninth graders nationally, about 48 will enter college four years later; in Alaska only about 33 will do so. Finally once students enter college, they have numerous career choices, and teaching is not always the most attractive to them (see report summary for more discussion of teacher recruitment issues). Addressing the need to prepare our own teachers will take improvement in all of these measures.

## University of Alaska teacher preparation and retention efforts

### Teacher Preparation within the University of Alaska System

The University of Alaska system offers teacher preparation at all three Major Academic Units (MAUs) – Anchorage (UAA), Fairbanks (UAF), and Southeast (UAS), via both face-to-face and online/e-Learning formats<sup>2</sup>. All three universities offer programs that lead to elementary, secondary, and special education initial certification. UAA offers initial certification in early childhood education and in early childhood special education. All three universities also offer special education endorsements and certificates for teachers interested in moving into that area. Between the three campuses, students can complete many degree programs completely online, including (but not limited to) a bachelor of arts in elementary or special education, a master of arts in teaching, a master of education in educational leadership, and a master of education in special education.

In addition, between the three MAUs there are many programs for educators wishing to add endorsements to their licensure or obtain masters degrees or certificates in specialized areas, including (but not limited to) reading specialist and cross-cultural education masters. The majority of these programs are offered via e-learning. All three universities also offer professional development opportunities to educators across the state and beyond, many in collaboration with school districts or professional organizations.

UA and its faculty are committed to student-centered learning. Faculty model an individualized, learner-centered approach to education that they want candidates to use with their P-12 students. Candidates are given scaffolding and multiple opportunities to meet target expectations on course projects/assessments. Reasonable accommodations are made to support candidate learning; when appropriate, course projects (and coordinated field experiences) are individualized to meet candidate needs and interests. Coursework is intentionally designed to promote an interchange of practical knowledge for candidates who are often working in schools with few resources and infrequent support from outside agencies.

All students in University of Alaska teacher education programs must take the Praxis I and Praxis II exams. Students must pass the Praxis I (Pre-Professional Skills Test) with scores that meet or exceed state standards before they enter student teaching, and they must pass one or more Praxis II content area exams with scores that meet or exceed state standards in order to receive an institutional recommendation for state licensure. This helps ensure that University of Alaska

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<sup>2</sup> Online or e-learning courses are offered in a number of formats. The University of Alaska defines e-Learning as planned learning that predominantly occurs in situations where a student is not required to be in a predetermined location. Delivery may be by video conference, audio conference, correspondence, tele-courses, satellite telecasts, via the Internet, CD-ROM, and/or video/audio tape. A course may be delivered entirely via e-Learning or by a hybrid of e-Learning and on-campus methods. eLearning may be asynchronous (such as a Blackboard course learning software-based courses that does not require large-group sessions with the instructor) or synchronous, where the class meets on a scheduled or regular basis with the instructor via videoconference, Internet-based software or audio conference.

teacher education graduates meet national standards for content knowledge in their areas of specialization.

All University of Alaska teacher education programs have received national accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Twenty-six separate programs within those schools and college are nationally recognized by their relevant Specialty Professional Associations (SPAs), thus ensuring that the programs and the institutions in which they operate meet or exceed national standards. NCATE is one of two organizations recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an accrediting institution specific to teacher education and it currently represents over 3 million individuals. To meet the necessary standards for initial and advanced programs, education institutions engage in a self-study, followed by a rigorous information review and site visit.

To make sure that UA teacher preparation programs are meeting both the needs of school districts throughout the state and university expectations, the College and Schools engage in several program improvement activities. Mission statements and program outcomes are reviewed annually to ensure that classes and program offerings align with them. We also survey current and former students as well as administrators and mentor teachers about the quality of UA students and programs, and on whether or not graduates are prepared to handle the rigors of teaching or their other educational responsibilities. This information is used to help the Schools and College improve program offerings.

#### *Initiatives to Increase the Number of Alaska Native Educators*

The Schools and College of Education at the University of Alaska (UA) have a strong commitment to the preparation of Alaska Native and Native Alaskan students for the teaching field. This is supported by multiple program delivery formats including traditional on-site face-to-face teaching, e-learning formats incorporating many advanced tools, summer institutes where on-site experiences help build collegial relationships and on-site visits. For example, since 1972 UAF has offered a full BA in Elementary Education degree for students who are in rural communities and who want to stay in rural communities. Nearly all of the students who complete a degree while in their own villages stay and teach in their community or region. UAF also has a fulltime Rural Advisor position to support the rural students in their programs.

As noted before, all three MAUs offer post-baccalaureate programs to students in rural communities via online distance learning. UAF's post-baccalaureate curriculum is designed specifically to prepare graduates to teach in rural and urban contexts. The curriculum is culturally responsive and place-based so that students know how to make state and national standards and district curriculum requirements relevant in whatever context they are in. Many of their faculty have experience in rural areas and thus are able to make coursework relevant and meaningful for rural students.

The UAF School of Education recently housed an Alaska Native Teacher Preparation Program grant to increase Native Alaskan educators. It provided funding for a number of Alaska Natives to

complete teaching degrees; 18 candidates completed a teacher certification program, of whom 17 are teaching in Alaska schools.

As an outcome of discussions with the Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI) during the 2012 Summer Session at UAF, the School of Education (SOE) Elementary Education Program has been approved to offer ED 245 (Child Development) as dual credit course for RAHI students, starting Summer 2013.

This fall the UAF SOE entered into discussions with the Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD) on ways the district can work with its paraprofessionals to help them complete the education and degree requirements necessary for state teacher certification. The goal of this collaboration is to increase LKSD's teacher corps for its dual immersion program.

At UAS, the Preparing Indigenous Teachers and Administrators for Alaska Schools (PITAAS) program supports both teacher candidates and teachers who are working toward advanced degrees in the acquisition of strong academic skills and rich indigenous knowledge so that they can provide culturally relevant K-12 instruction. Eleven PITAAS students graduated in 2012.

The UAS Village Teacher program supports eleven Alaska Native students preparing to become reading specialists and nine who are preparing to become math specialists in their districts.

A partnership between the UAA College of Education (COE) and the Kashunamiut School District was formed in 2010 to support twelve paraprofessionals who are working toward their bachelor's degrees in elementary education. This partnership, known as the Chevak Teacher Education Initiative, embraces the concepts of inclusivity and culturally relevant teaching. Course work reflects both Western and Cup'ik cultures and philosophies. By December 2013, about half of the group will have earned their associates degrees. This initiative is providing important insights about the power of collaboration as an indigenous community, school and university come together to create a space that supports cultural and language revitalization. The UAA COE is currently developing expansions and refinements to the program based on research on the initiative as well as insights gained through the partnership and project.

#### *Preparing Alaskans as well as Educators from Elsewhere to Work in Rural Schools*

Elementary, Secondary and Special Education certification programs which are 100% distance based are offered so that students who currently reside in a remote community can earn a teaching certificate while remaining in their community. Because experience in the classroom is crucial to the preparation of good teachers, the teacher education programs at all three UA campuses devote a significant portion of their non-personnel budget to travel so that university faculty can supervise practicum and student teaching experiences. For example, UAF student teachers and school counseling interns are practicing in 25 sites throughout Alaska, ranging from Anaktuvuk Pass in the north to Thorne Bay and Ketchikan in the south, and all of these candidates need supervision. The cost for this can be quite considerable, but it is one the UA Schools and College of Education willingly support given the importance of preparing quality teachers (as well as counselors and

principals) for rural communities. We are currently compiling information on the costs associated with preparing an educator in Alaska, including the costs associated with rural practicum supervision; this information will be available later this spring.

University of Alaska Schools and College of Education offer students a minimum one week rural practicum experience. University faculty and staff arrange classroom placements, travel and accommodations for each student. This experience is typically arranged in conjunction with the job fair held in Anchorage each year. In this way teacher candidates are encouraged to think of the experience in terms of future employment. In addition, when they return to their home campus or on-line classes, students present projects completed during the rural practicum and share their experiences with their fellow students. While the experience does not always lead to immediate employment, it does allow the student to make an informed choice regarding living and working in a rural community. A new pilot program this year makes use of the Alaska Teacher Placement offices to strategically place students in districts that will have a specific need for their content area. Additionally, principals and superintendents will receive a portfolio of information on each student so that they can recruit based on content area as well as position suitability.

The Rural Alaska Principal Preparation and Support (RAPPS) Program, a \$3.6 million federally funded partnership between UAA and the Alaska Staff Development Network, has been successful in preparing and placing rural administrators. Over the past four years, 74 RAPPS participants received scholarships. Of these, 63 remain in their home districts in 2012, all of whom will have completed their administrative certification by May 2013, when the grant ends. Only two of the candidates moved out of the state to accept administrative placements. Two districts have 100% retention of RAPPS candidates in their respective districts. District leaders have expressed interest in continuing the development of rural administrators beyond the life of the federal grant. Partnering superintendents have created a short list of potential candidates.

The UAA Statewide Induction Seminar is a year-long hybrid distance course for teachers and administrators new to rural Alaska. It seeks to narrow the achievement gap by addressing the cultural dissonance of the Western pedagogies, curricula and school reforms present in most schools by integrating approaches more aligned with Alaska Native ways of “being, valuing and doing.” The Seminar was designed by Western and Alaska Native university faculty working in collaboration. This increases the likelihood that the teachers and administrators new to rural Alaska understand the local cultural context and how deeply it affects student learning. With this vital awareness, the teachers and administrators have the tools to provide culturally appropriate learning experiences to students and also become more integrated into their communities, easing high attrition rates.

UAS is offering Alaska’s first Massively Open On-line Course (MOOC) in the education field. Teachers across Alaska can register either for credit or to participate free of charge in a semester long course designed to enable them to design differentiated curriculum to meet the diverse needs of Alaska students.

UAF Professor Jerry Lipka received a three-year U.S. Department of Education grant. The “Measuring Proportionally: Elders’ Wisdom Applied to Teaching and Learning Math Project” responds to the well-documented need to improve the academic performance (math in this project) of Alaska Native students by incorporating the Elders’ wisdom. The project will refine, develop, and implement elementary-mathematics instructional materials as well as professional development (PD) that will develop Culturally Competent Mathematics Teachers (CCMT). The professional development activities and supports will engage teachers as they learn to construct and use cultural mediating math tools, such as number lines, geometric sets, and fraction sets. By applying lessons learned from Elders, the project will show how each tool can be used to teach across the math strands. The project includes the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School (Anchorage), Alaska Gateway School District, Hoonah City School District, the Koliganek School (Southwest Regional School District), and the Yupiit School District. Additional school districts will be selected for piloting and for the quasi-experimental study in third year of the project.

#### *Faculty Research on Issues around Teacher Retention and Quality*

In addition to the educator preparation and support programs and initiatives described above, faculty at the University of Alaska Schools and College of Education are engaged in research to better understand the challenges as well as potential solutions around teacher retention and quality improvement. Several of these projects are highlighted here.

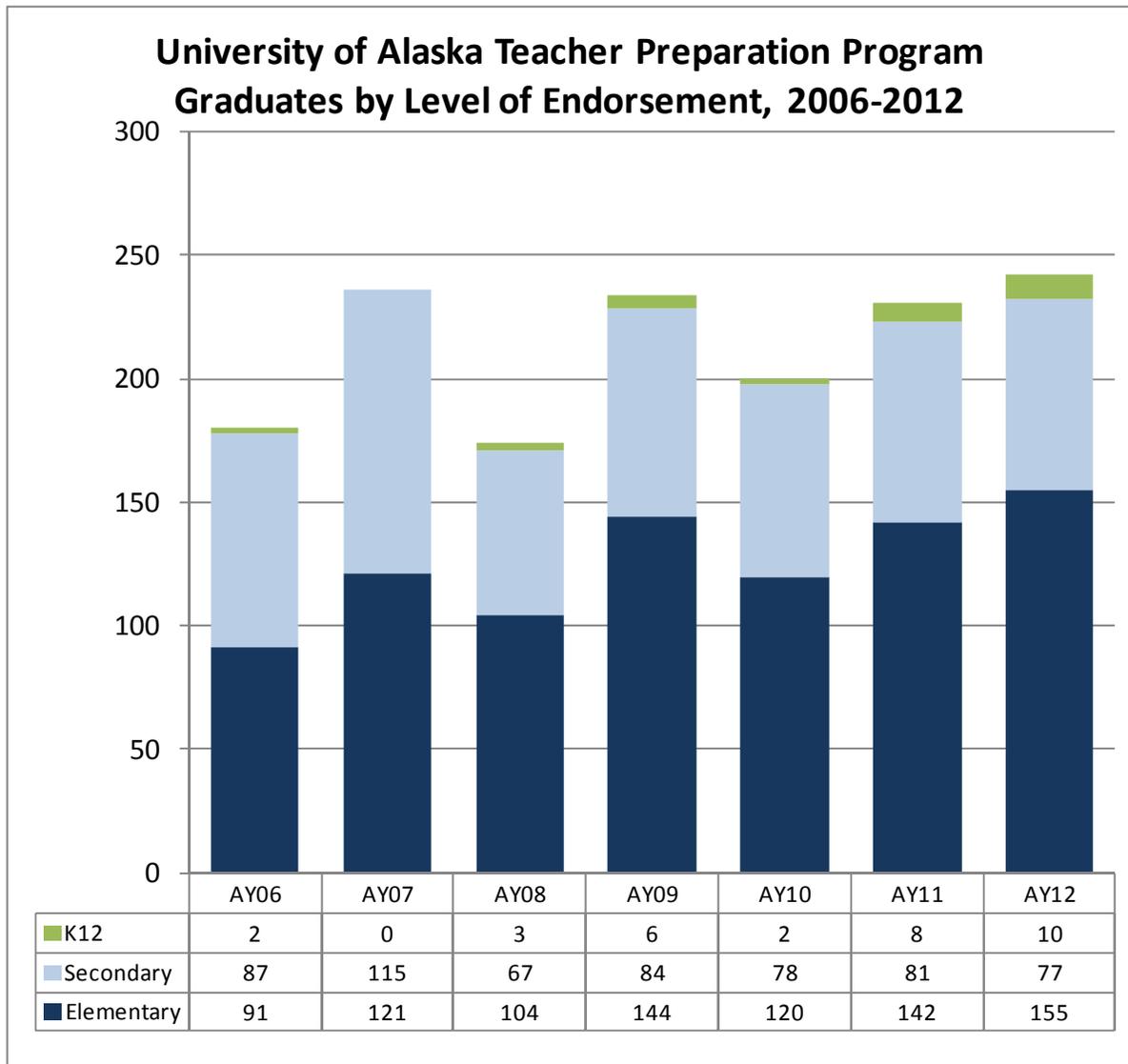
UAF Assistant Professor Ute Kaden received a three-year grant from the National Science Foundation for the study “Factors Related to Teacher Retention in Arctic Alaska, an Integral Part of the Circumpolar North.” The study aims to identify 1) the degree of school and community integration which influence teacher retention; 2) school workplace characteristics, including recruitment practices, which influence teacher retention; 3) teacher preparation practices which influence retention; and 4) other key variables for understanding teacher retention in Arctic Alaska. Researchers working on this grant include faculty from the UAF School of Education with backgrounds in indigenous studies, mathematics education, and special education and from UA Office of K-12 Outreach, including researchers working on the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project.

UAS Assistant Professor Martin Laster is completing the study “Driving and Restraining Forces for Quality Teacher Evaluation in Alaska,” funded by the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research. Dr. Laster is exploring the factors that impact quality teacher evaluation across the continuum of rural to urban districts, and looking at whether any might be modified by policy decisions.

#### Data on New Teacher Preparation in the University of Alaska System

Initial teacher preparation programs at the University of Alaska produced 242 new teachers from June 2011-May 2012 (Academic Year 2012); the average number of new teacher graduates over the last seven years is 214. These teacher graduates included 155 elementary-level teachers (including 17 specializing in early childhood), 77 secondary teachers and 10 certified for grades K-12, in Art, Music or Special Education. Among the secondary teachers were 16 new math teachers and 12 new science teachers. Fourteen of the new teachers were certified in Special Education (some at the elementary level, some at secondary, and some for K12). While the total number at all levels has

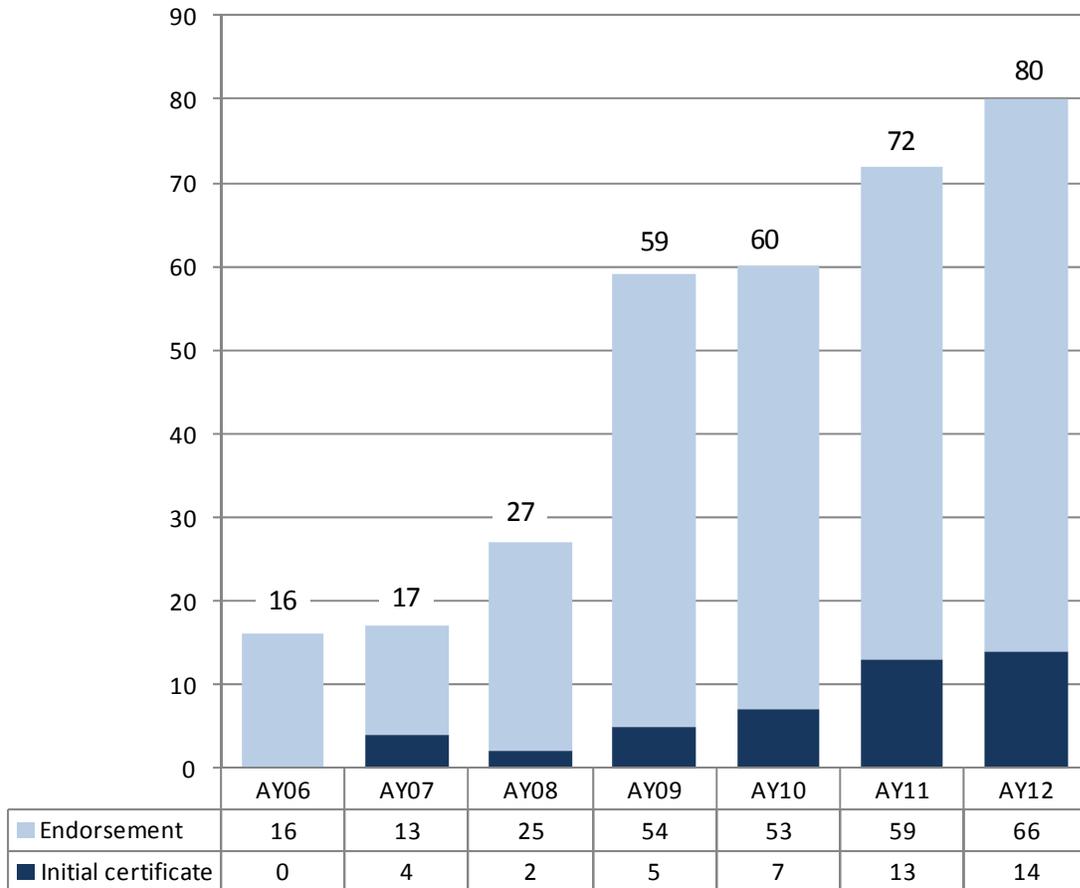
ranged from 180 to 242, there are no statistically significant trends for the total initial teachers, new elementary teachers or new secondary teachers.



*Special Education Teachers*

In addition to the 14 new teachers who obtained special education endorsements along with their initial certification, 66 existing teachers earned special education certificates, for a 2012 total of 80 new special education teachers. The number of teachers receiving special education endorsements at UA has grown 5-fold between 2006 and 2012, from 16 to 80.

## University of Alaska Special Education Graduates, 2006-2012



### *Retention of University of Alaska-prepared Teachers*

Between 2006 and 2012, the University of Alaska graduated about 200 new teachers each year. University of Alaska graduates made up about 12% of new hires across the state in 2011 and again in 2012. Teachers prepared in Alaska tend to stay in Alaska’s schools longer than those who come from outside the state. So, while in a given year UA prepared educators may only make only about 12% of the new educators that districts hire, UA-prepared teachers make up 28 percent of the statewide teaching force. Moreover, the percent of all certified staff that received any education degree or endorsement from UA is slightly higher – about 32 percent. Appendix A includes detailed tables and graphs showing UA teacher education degrees and certificates granted from AY2006 - AY2012.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This report only addresses teachers prepared by University of Alaska programs. The forthcoming Education Supply and Demand Update Report will include data on educators prepared at Alaska Pacific University and via in-state alternative certification programs such as that operated by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

## **Additional efforts to address challenges in recruiting, preparing and retaining teachers**

In addition to the programs and research in the UA Schools and College of Education described above, there are programs and research being conducted in the UA Office of K-12 Outreach, as well as research being done at the UAA Center for Alaska Education Policy Research. We also briefly describe the new University of Alaska Teacher Education Consortium, which is facilitating conversations on teacher preparation and support issues between the UA Schools and College of Education and key stakeholders across the state.

### Future Educators of Alaska (FEA)

In 2013, FEA is evolving into a Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO). For this reason, the focus of FEA this year is on preparing high school students for leadership roles. FEA will continue to help students plan for careers in education, work with FEA students in after-school clubs, and guide FEA students enrolled in "Exploring Education Careers" courses. In addition, FEA students will participate in competitions that hone their oral presentation skills. For the first time, more than a dozen elected FEA students from across rural Alaska will participate in youth leadership roles at the 2013 CTSO Performance Based Assessment Conference (March 21-23 in Anchorage). These FEA youth leaders also will guide the annual FEA student gathering (April 2013 on the UAA campus). In addition to the "Exploring Education Careers" course, a second dual-credit course is being planned to help ease graduating FEA high school student transition into UA Schools and Colleges of Education.

### Alaska Teacher Placement (ATP)

In 2013, ATP will host one major in-state and two out-of-state job fairs to connect qualified educators with Alaska districts, along with dozens of virtual job fairs and 24-hour iCommunity support. This year, ATP is increasing collaboration with the Deans of UA Schools and College of Education to determine how to offer career services to education majors in their final years at UA, with the ultimate goal of assuring placement in Alaska districts for increasing numbers of UA education graduates. Because ISER statistics show that teachers from Alaska stay longer in Alaskan schools, the ATP bridge between UA Schools and College of Education and Alaska districts for our UA education graduates should lead to increased retention and decreased dependence on teachers from out of state. A pilot project between ATP and UAS is underway to determine how much and what kind of intervention is needed to increase UA Education student interest in jobs in rural Alaska.

### Statewide Teacher Mentoring

The Alaska Statewide Mentor Project is a partnership between the University of Alaska and the State Department of Education and Early Development. State funding currently provides mentors to an average of 380 early career teachers annually in mostly rural districts across the state each year. ASMP has received a \$15 million grant to expand the program to first- and second-year teachers in the Anchorage, Fairbanks, Mat-Su, Sitka and Kenai school districts. A large part of the money will

fund a randomized controlled trial to test how mentoring affects early career teachers' effectiveness and their students' achievement while serving an additional 520 early career teachers over three years.

### PREPARES

PREPARES is a 5-yr National Science Foundation funded scale-up research project exploring whether a model that has shown promise in improving teacher retention in rural, predominantly indigenous and low-income serving Alaska districts is transferable to other parts of Alaska and the nation. The model involves providing professional development for teachers based on data-driven and research-based best-practices for engaging indigenous students in the study of science, math, and other subjects. The professional development enables teachers to provide place-based, community-relevant, culturally responsive instruction in their classrooms, and is based on the premise that teachers who learn to provide place-based instruction that is also community-relevant and culturally responsive are more likely to see an increase in both the engagement and achievement of their students across subject areas, are therefore are more likely to stay in rural districts longer than teachers who do not offer such instruction. Unanticipated benefits to the model to date include persistent increased community and parental engagement in student scholastic endeavors.

### Center for Alaska Education Policy Research

The Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR) is engaged in research projects on teacher retention as well as on broader education issues in Alaska, including a statewide teacher survey to study the reasons teachers stay in or leave their schools and to better understand teacher perceptions of the places they work. This project is described in greater detail in the "*Future Reports*" section of the summary, along with several other projects on related topics.

### Bringing All the Players Together: The University of Alaska Teacher Education Consortium

On September 25, 2012, the first meeting of the University of Alaska Teacher Education Consortium was held. The meeting included a morning listening session, where educators and others were invited to share their thoughts on the UA Teacher Education programs, specifically on what the programs are doing well and should continue to do, what could be done to improve them, challenges in teacher preparation, and priorities for improvement. The afternoon meeting focused on developing actions that members of the consortium can take to improve teacher recruitment, preparation and retention. Notes from the meeting are included as Appendix D.

# Research on University of Alaska initial licensure graduates: Why aren't they teaching?

In response to questions raised by the Alaska Legislature and the UA Board of Regents regarding why more UA graduates are not in the classroom, in fall 2012 CAEPR researchers surveyed graduates of University of Alaska initial teacher preparation programs who graduated between the fall of 2010 and the summer of 2012 (More information on this study is provided in Appendix E.). The survey asked whether respondents had applied for a teaching certificate or for a job, whether they were working as teachers, in other education jobs, or in other fields. For those graduates who did not look for a teaching job, we asked why they chose not to teach; for those who looked and were not hired, they asked why they thought they weren't successful in obtaining a teaching position.

The response rate for the survey was less than 30% - too low to statistically generalize these findings or generalize the frequency of these outcomes to all program graduates. However, our respondents included graduates of all types on initial teacher programs, and were employed in public schools at similar rates to UA graduates overall. We believe the results of this study shed insight into the experiences of many UA graduates.

Of the 113 respondents, 90% applied for a teaching certificate upon completion of their program. The 10% who did not apply were not seeking a teaching job and cited travel, pursuit of other interests, acceptance or continuation of employment in nonteaching jobs, lack of available teaching jobs, or simply had no desire to teach.

95 percent of our respondents were employed the fall immediately following their graduation. More than 4 out of 5 respondents (84%) worked in some type of education job, although only about 40% were teachers (see table below). Of those respondents working in education, 14% worked in early childhood (pre-K) settings, 64% worked in elementary (K-6), and 66% in middle/high school settings.

Answer	Response	%
employed as a teacher	47	41%
working as a substitute teacher	33	29%
working in some other education job	17	15%
working in a job outside of education	12	11%
not working	4	4%
Total	113	100%

We asked the 59 percent of our respondents (68 of 113) who were not employed as teachers the fall following graduation, about their job searches (67 of the 68 responded to these questions). More than 70% of them (48) had applied for a teaching job immediately after graduation. The 19

who did not apply for positions most frequently cited going back to school for advanced education, lack of job availability, and uncertainty about teaching in the current educational system as why they had not applied. Other reasons, such as staying home to have a baby, needing a break, transferring with the military, accepting a position in a private school, and waiting on institutional recommendation and teacher certificate were given by just one or two respondents. About half of those not employed as teachers (9 out of 19) later searched for a teaching job.

Of the 48 who applied for teaching jobs immediately following graduation, most applied to one or more of Alaska’s five largest districts (Anchorage, Mat-Su, Kenai, Fairbanks, and Juneau) and fewer than 20% applied to any other Alaska district.

Answer	Response	%
Anchorage School District	21	44%
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District	9	19%
Mat-Su Borough School District	10	21%
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	8	17%
Juneau School District	10	21%
Other Alaska public schools	8	17%
Schools outside Alaska	10	21%
Alaska non-public schools	3	6%

We asked all those who had searched for a teaching job either immediately after graduation or later about their willingness to relocate. Of those 58 graduates, almost 60% were not able to relocate because they needed to stay in their home community. Most (23 of 25) respondents who were willing to relocate also identified places they were unwilling to relocate. While three said they would not be willing to leave Alaska, 15 said they would not move to some or all of rural Alaska. This means that only 10 of 58 graduates looking for (but not finding) work were able and willing to relocate to rural Alaska districts. Family/personal reasons and environment (including weather, lifestyle, and teaching/living conditions) were the major reasons respondents would not be willing to relocate to specific areas.

We asked our respondents who applied but did not get a job, why they believed they were not hired. By far the most frequent answer was competition, lack of jobs, or both, cited by almost two-thirds (35 of the 54) of our respondents. Seven were unwilling to relocate and a few (2 to 4 for each reason) cited lack of experience, lack of interviewing skills, moving and having a baby. We interviewed 21 of our survey respondents (representing all UA initial teacher preparation programs) who were not employed as teachers the fall immediately following graduation to explore these reasons in more depth.

Reflecting the answers above, 80% (17) indicated there were limited teaching job opportunities, which included comments related to no openings, no offers, district budget constraints, and

competition/lack of experience. Adding to those answers, one-third (7) listed other opportunities, such as travel, employment in nonteaching jobs, and family as reasons. Third, slightly less than 20% (4) expressed uncertainty about teaching. (Percentages do not equal 100 because many respondents provided multiple reasons.)

When asked what UA could do to assist in their search for employment, the most frequent response (8 of the 21) was nothing or “I don’t know.” Two graduates recommended resume writing help, and one each recommended help with classroom management, assessment, interviewing practice, cover letter writing, job hunting protocol (who to contact), information about job fairs and job openings, clarification of the certification process, and honesty about the bleak job opportunities.

To gain an additional perspective on UA graduates, we interviewed human resource personnel from the five Alaska school districts that hire the largest number of UA graduates (Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, and Mat-Su). These key informants have general knowledge of the quality of teachers hired by their districts. When asked how well prepared they found UA graduates, two were complimentary, two were neutral, and one was uncomplimentary.

Key informants reported both consistent strengths and weaknesses of UA graduates. Strengths included understanding the environment and diverse student populations of the district, role of the general education teacher working with ELL students, classroom management, assessment, and the connection between instruction and assessment. Other strengths included passion for teaching, love of students, interest and passion for being in education, and knowledge of the state and the district in which they have applied. One key informant indicated that there were no consistent strengths that set UA graduates apart. Weaknesses included preparation in special education, instructional practices, literacy integration at the secondary level, and the role of the general education teacher in working with special education students. Two key informants indicated that there were no consistent weaknesses, but one of these indicated more preparation in dealing with diverse populations would be beneficial.

National and Alaska researchers have long documented that teacher shortages are both location and subject-specific (NCREL, 2000; McDiarmid, 2003), and these data are in line with those findings. While UA graduates are generally prepared to teach, there are some graduates who are less prepared for the classroom, as reflected by one of our key informants. The largest factor in explaining graduates’ inability to finding teaching jobs, though, seems to be that too many graduates are competing for the limited positions in the state’s largest districts, and too few are able to relocate to rural and remote schools where districts need more applicants. Another factor in graduates’ difficulty finding jobs is that more prospective teachers are choosing elementary education degrees than there are openings for them, and too few are choosing to teach in hard-to-fill areas such as special education, secondary math and secondary physical science.

## Summary

The University of Alaska system continues to focus on expanding the number of qualified Alaskans who can be employed in Alaska's schools. Each year, the UA system adds about 200 new teachers to Alaska's teaching force and 60-70% of those go on to teach in Alaska's public schools. However, most of these newly certified teachers seek employment in urban or road system districts, while most of the teaching vacancies occur in remote and rural districts. This leaves the state's schools, especially the rural schools, needing to hire several hundred teachers from elsewhere.

No systematic research has been conducted on why there are not more Alaskans choosing to enter the teaching profession. However, there are a number of factors that may be affecting these decisions, from changes in the teacher retirement system to a reduction in the competitiveness of Alaska's teacher salaries compared with salaries in other professions and in other states, to the expenses teacher candidates must incur during their education, in particular during their unpaid clinical practice, when it is nearly impossible to maintain outside employment. Adding to this is concern about trends in teacher evaluation; a new teacher evaluation plan just adopted in Alaska relies extensively on student achievement data, and both within the state and across the nation there is unease about how this will affect teacher employment and salaries. CAEPR is conducting research this spring that should help policymakers and teacher educators better understand the impact of these issues. Finally, the downturn in the economy the past few years made teaching jobs less available; fewer teachers left Alaska's schools, and flat funding for the state's schools also led to fewer openings and even layoffs in some districts.<sup>4</sup>

This report highlights what the University of Alaska is doing to improve the recruitment and retention of students for teacher education programs and to strengthen existing programs. The UA Teacher Education Plan identified several goals in this area that faculty and staff are now working on, and CAEPR is doing research around issues that impact those goals. In addition, the University of Alaska Office of K-12 Outreach is supporting efforts to recruit and retain teachers across the state, working directly with districts and conducting research.

All of these efforts should move the University of Alaska system toward better meeting the needs of Alaska's schools. However, the broader factors affecting the decisions of students to enter college, pursue the teaching profession, choose to work in rural schools, and stay in the profession once they complete their training require a broad effort that includes current teachers and administrators, parents, community leaders, and policymakers. We need to explore questions and have frank discussions around working conditions, teacher compensation and incentives to enter the field, among other issues. All of these are factors that affect the ability of Alaska's schools to attract and retain educators.

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<sup>4</sup> In 2012-2013 the Anchorage School District laid off teachers and did not accept new applications for teachers in several content areas. <http://www.asdk12.org/employment/certificated/12-13applications/>

### Future Reports

The next installment of this report is due in spring 2015. In addition to reporting updated data on teachers and other educators prepared by the University of Alaska, we will continue to explore issues of concern around teacher recruitment, preparation and retention in Alaska. There are several research projects underway that will inform the next report:

a) *Statewide Teacher Survey*

In Spring 2013, CAEPR will conduct a survey on the factors influencing teachers' decisions to stay in their schools/districts or to leave. Teachers will be asked about issues such as their perceptions of leadership in their school; their relationships with parents and community; salary, benefits and financial incentives to stay in their school; and mentoring and professional development efforts. This survey will be done in collaboration with UAF Assistant Professor Ute Kaden. In fall 2013, CAEPR will match data on teacher employment to see which teachers who participated in the survey continued to teach in Alaska and in their same school, and which did not, and analyze the relationship between teacher survey responses and work outcomes, so that they can create models around the factors contributing to teacher retention and turnover.

b) *Educator Supply and Demand Study*

CAEPR is preparing a comprehensive update of data on teacher and administrator supply, demand and turnover, including a comprehensive literature review on factors influencing teacher retention and turnover; data on the number of teachers and administrators prepared by institutions in-state versus coming in from outside Alaska; teacher and administrator turnover rates by district; and a look specifically at the numbers and career pathways of Alaska Native teachers and administrators.

c) *University of Alaska Teacher Education Graduate Surveys*

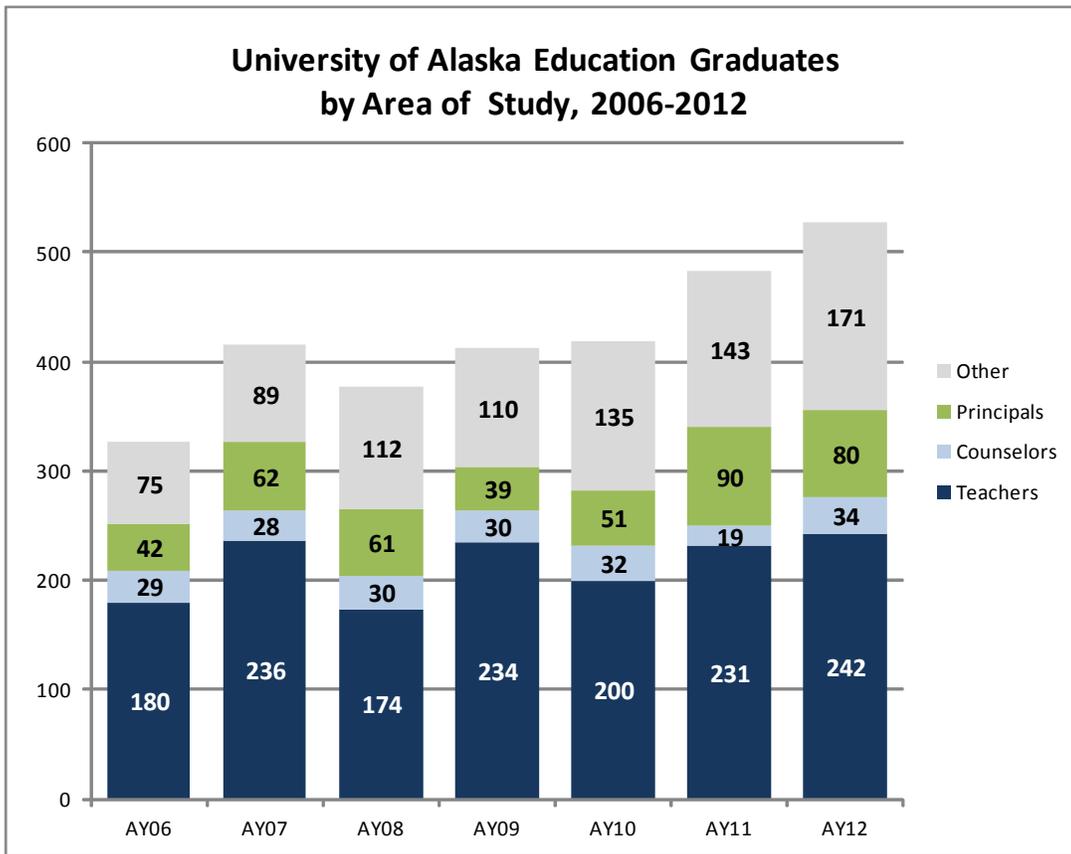
In collaboration with the UA Schools and College of Education, CAEPR will be conducting surveys of graduates from all of the education programs across the UA system one, three and five years after they graduate as well as just before graduation. We will report specifically on the teacher education graduates, focusing on their perceptions of how well they were prepared for their current positions and suggestions they have for strengthening teacher preparation programs.

## Appendix A: Detailed Data Tables

### A1. University of Alaska Education Program Graduates

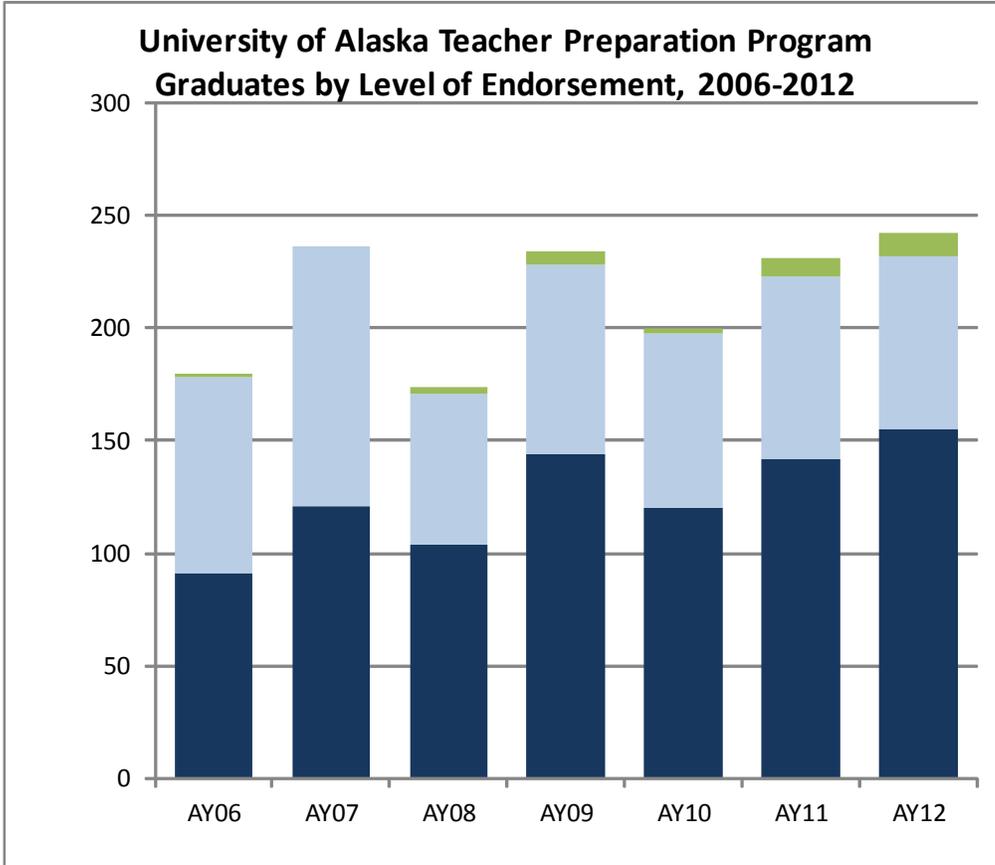
**University of Alaska Education Graduates by Area of Study**

	AY06	AY07	AY08	AY09	AY10	AY11	AY12
Teachers	180	236	174	234	200	231	242
Counselors	29	28	30	30	32	19	34
Principals	42	62	61	39	51	90	80
Other	75	89	112	110	135	143	171
	326	415	377	413	418	483	527



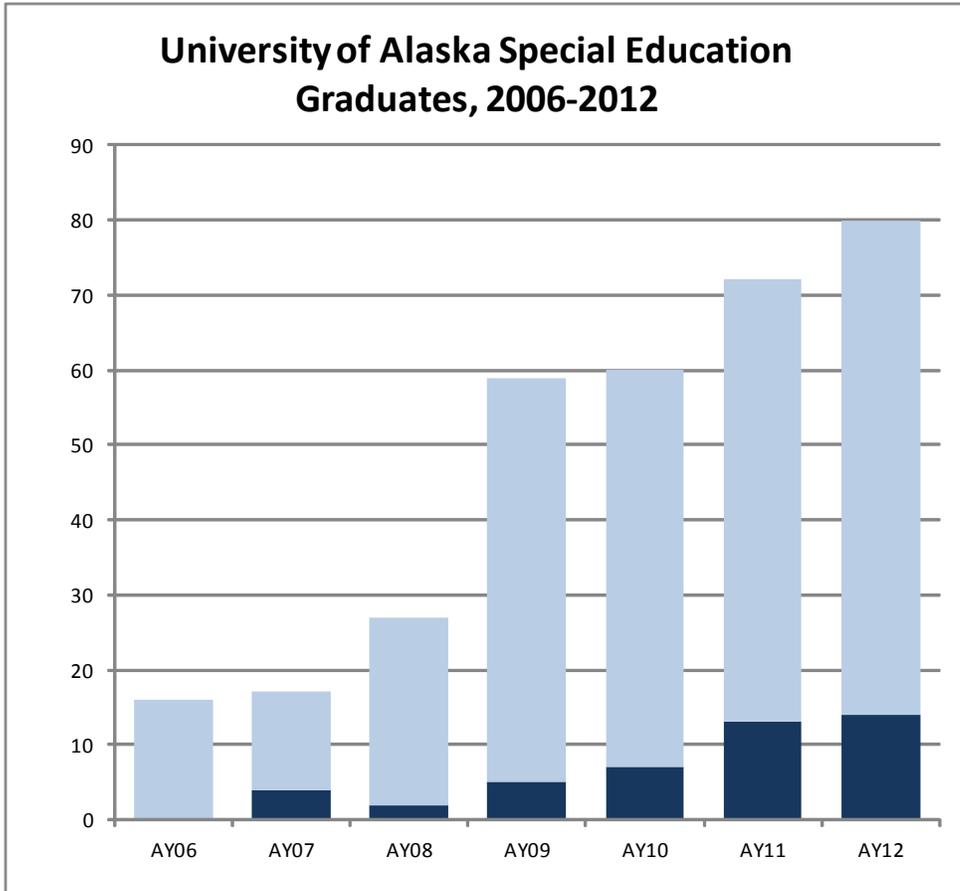
**University of Alaska Initial Teacher Program Graduates by Level**

	AY06	AY07	AY08	AY09	AY10	AY11	AY12
Elementary	91	121	104	144	120	142	155
Secondary	87	115	67	84	78	81	77
K12	2	0	3	6	2	8	10



**University of Alaska Special Education Graduates - Initial Licensure & Endorsement**

	AY06	AY07	AY08	AY09	AY10	AY11	AY12
Initial certificate	0	4	2	5	7	13	14
Endorsement	16	13	25	54	53	59	66
SpED total	16	17	27	59	60	72	80



## A2. Teacher Turnover Rates by District, 1999-2012

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
2 'Denali '	28.6%	13.8%	33.3%	14.8%	37.9%	17.2%	20.0%	18.2%	21.2%	23.3%	26.7%	23.1%	14.8%
3 'Alaska Gateway'	12.5%	20.0%	13.9%	24.2%	23.5%	12.1%	28.6%	31.3%	18.8%	25.8%	12.9%	13.3%	11.8%
4 'Aleutian Region'	42.9%	33.3%	33.3%	16.7%	33.3%	57.1%	n/a	n/a	33.3%	33.3%	50.0%	60.0%	50.0%
5 'Anchorage'	8.0%	7.8%	9.7%	11.9%	9.8%	10.2%	8.5%	9.7%	11.9%	8.8%	7.1%	8.0%	9.1%
6 'Annette Island'	18.2%	23.3%	37.0%	7.4%	25.0%	18.2%	34.4%	30.0%	40.6%	6.9%	18.8%	41.4%	29.6%
7 'Bering Strait'	33.1%	34.0%	23.5%	32.2%	34.1%	32.7%	21.9%	19.3%	24.7%	22.8%	27.9%	25.6%	25.7%
8 'Bristol Bay'	8.3%	8.3%	12.5%	18.2%	35.0%	21.1%	37.5%	20.0%	37.5%	25.0%	20.0%	43.8%	40.0%
9 'Chatham'	19.0%	28.6%	12.5%	34.8%	35.0%	23.8%	40.0%	31.3%	33.3%	52.6%	16.7%	15.0%	35.3%
10 'Chugach'	16.7%	8.3%	35.7%	7.1%	35.3%	25.0%	7.1%	8.3%	7.1%	0.0%	7.7%	21.1%	12.5%
11 'Copper River'	13.6%	14.6%	9.5%	14.0%	11.9%	15.8%	13.2%	17.9%	15.8%	15.8%	13.5%	21.1%	16.7%
12 'Cordova City'	27.8%	8.6%	18.9%	17.1%	15.2%	25.0%	6.3%	22.6%	7.1%	10.7%	3.4%	10.0%	17.9%
13 'Craig City'	23.1%	11.5%	9.7%	28.6%	17.1%	16.2%	17.6%	12.5%	8.8%	20.0%	10.8%	31.0%	11.1%
14 'DeltaGreely'	12.9%	22.0%	19.1%	11.9%	24.5%	14.8%	14.5%	12.7%	16.4%	18.5%	19.4%	20.0%	14.5%
15 'Dillingham'	31.7%	19.4%	22.0%	40.5%	22.5%	15.8%	22.5%	25.6%	37.8%	31.0%	22.0%	12.8%	10.5%
16 'Fairbanks'	0.4%	15.5%	8.8%	10.6%	11.2%	10.5%	8.4%	10.9%	10.0%	11.7%	8.8%	10.3%	10.9%
17 'Galena'	9.8%	19.0%	8.9%	7.9%	13.2%	11.8%	18.2%	13.8%	3.2%	19.1%	7.6%	10.9%	12.3%
18 'Haines'	14.7%	11.4%	12.9%	23.3%	23.1%	19.0%	4.5%	22.7%	9.5%	4.8%	13.0%	16.0%	23.1%
19 'Hoonah'	19.0%	4.5%	4.5%	26.1%	15.8%	20.0%	7.7%	14.3%	7.7%	33.3%	50.0%	50.0%	25.0%
20 'Hydaburg'	33.3%	44.4%	44.4%	18.2%	63.6%	40.0%	9.1%	9.1%	20.0%	27.3%	11.1%	22.2%	11.1%
21 'Iditarod'	35.0%	38.5%	50.0%	48.4%	68.8%	46.7%	25.8%	41.4%	37.5%	29.6%	19.0%	52.0%	48.0%
22 'Juneau'	17.7%	8.5%	11.0%	10.3%	13.0%	8.5%	10.9%	10.1%	9.8%	10.2%	10.2%	11.1%	10.5%
23 'Kake'	33.3%	41.2%	7.1%	0.0%	18.8%	42.9%	31.3%	38.5%	11.1%	20.0%	9.1%	8.3%	0.0%
24 'Kenai'	12.8%	6.8%	9.0%	12.1%	13.6%	10.8%	11.2%	13.3%	12.7%	10.1%	10.5%	9.0%	9.2%
25 'Ketchikan'	9.7%	14.3%	9.7%	11.9%	8.5%	7.7%	4.2%	10.6%	12.3%	13.5%	11.3%	10.1%	9.2%
27 'Klawock'	n/a	n/a	18.8%	17.6%	26.7%	7.1%	26.7%	6.7%	13.3%	0.0%	6.7%	13.3%	5.9%
28 'Kodiak'	12.3%	14.1%	10.7%	13.0%	11.5%	11.0%	14.8%	11.6%	10.8%	14.8%	8.8%	17.0%	14.0%
29 'Kuspuk'	27.7%	29.8%	34.8%	36.2%	33.3%	42.1%	22.6%	34.3%	16.7%	22.5%	17.9%	26.5%	5.7%
30 'Lake & Peninsula'	32.0%	37.5%	42.6%	27.5%	27.5%	20.4%	34.0%	39.1%	27.5%	8.9%	31.9%	28.3%	18.2%
31 'Lower Kuskokwim'	23.4%	18.4%	22.1%	23.7%	24.0%	19.8%	20.3%	14.8%	21.6%	10.8%	16.4%	16.0%	11.7%
32 'Lower Yukon'	22.7%	22.6%	31.0%	29.5%	17.1%	21.1%	30.1%	31.9%	25.0%	27.9%	22.8%	20.7%	29.5%
33 'MatSu '	14.7%	5.6%	6.0%	7.6%	8.9%	8.8%	7.5%	6.7%	10.5%	7.4%	6.6%	5.4%	10.7%

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
34 'Nenana'	13.3%	18.2%	14.3%	32.4%	41.9%	18.2%	14.3%	7.7%	24.0%	9.1%	12.0%	3.8%	20.0%
35 'Nome'	21.8%	16.4%	25.0%	17.6%	22.4%	14.9%	6.5%	10.0%	20.0%	13.7%	9.8%	17.0%	18.2%
36 'North Slope'	6.0%	31.4%	21.3%	22.7%	17.7%	20.9%	24.2%	46.2%	42.6%	50.0%	25.9%	29.3%	24.4%
37 'Northwest Arctic'	23.2%	26.0%	29.3%	25.9%	19.3%	24.6%	24.7%	19.0%	22.0%	29.5%	16.8%	26.2%	33.3%
38 'Pelican'	25.0%	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%	33.3%	75.0%	100.0%	50.0%	100.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%
39 'Petersburg'	6.5%	10.9%	2.1%	14.6%	14.6%	7.0%	15.2%	9.1%	11.1%	12.2%	7.0%	9.5%	7.9%
40 'Pribilof'	28.6%	25.0%	54.5%	38.5%	16.7%	18.2%	35.7%	41.7%	36.4%	50.0%	36.4%	27.3%	45.5%
42 'Sitka'	7.4%	10.3%	7.2%	6.7%	17.1%	7.5%	8.3%	4.6%	12.8%	9.3%	9.4%	11.9%	7.7%
43 'Skagway'	15.4%	23.1%	30.8%	21.4%	15.4%	38.5%	8.3%	7.7%	30.8%	16.7%	8.3%	30.8%	11.1%
44 'Southeast Island'	n/a	n/a	27.3%	29.2%	33.3%	38.1%	13.6%	42.9%	30.0%	25.0%	26.1%	15.8%	27.3%
45 'Southwest Region'	27.9%	27.7%	35.8%	36.4%	15.6%	n/a	n/a	39.3%	16.1%	29.7%	28.6%	40.3%	25.9%
46 'Saint Marys'	36.4%	41.7%	7.1%	42.9%	64.3%	38.5%	60.0%	33.3%	30.8%	30.8%	14.3%	7.1%	57.1%
47 'Unalaska'	n/a	n/a	10.3%	20.0%	10.0%	6.7%	12.9%	6.3%	28.1%	21.9%	16.1%	12.5%	9.4%
48 'Valdez'	7.0%	6.9%	11.1%	20.0%	11.5%	11.9%	8.6%	5.5%	7.7%	5.9%	4.1%	9.6%	7.8%
49 'Wrangell'	15.2%	20.6%	0.0%	6.3%	21.2%	0.0%	7.4%	19.2%	12.0%	14.8%	11.5%	10.3%	3.6%
50 'Yakutat'	31.3%	31.3%	35.3%	36.8%	17.6%	20.0%	16.7%	7.1%	23.1%	15.4%	15.4%	0.0%	21.4%
51 'Yukon Flats'	40.0%	28.6%	26.8%	31.4%	47.1%	28.1%	34.4%	45.5%	37.9%	37.5%	29.0%	32.3%	33.3%
52 'Yukon Koyukuk'	n/a	n/a	44.2%	32.0%	32.0%	24.5%	21.5%	39.4%	31.6%	24.4%	12.8%	23.6%	17.6%
53 'Tanana'	62.5%	16.7%	66.7%	25.0%	55.6%	71.4%	16.7%	42.9%	25.0%	83.3%	50.0%	40.0%	60.0%
54 'Yupitit'	n/a	n/a	26.5%	29.7%	32.4%	25.7%	18.4%	43.9%	35.0%	46.5%	52.3%	39.1%	22.2%
55 'Kashunamiut'	35.0%	20.0%	18.2%	8.0%	19.2%	17.2%	40.7%	37.9%	29.4%	31.3%	15.6%	15.2%	50.0%
56 'Aleutians East'	36.7%	38.2%	27.8%	28.9%	47.1%	23.5%	n/a	n/a	40.0%	24.2%	5.7%	41.2%	9.7%
98 'Mt Edgecumbe'	7.1%	20.0%	6.7%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	10.5%	8.7%	4.2%	0.0%	8.3%	16.0%
99 Alyeska Central Sch	20.0%	19.0%	5.6%	15.0%	35.0%	100.0%	School no longer in operation						
Alaska total	12.1%	12.7%	13.0%	14.7%	14.3%	13.1%	12.2%	13.6%	14.6%	13.0%	10.8%	12.0%	12.5%
Urban	8.7%	8.7%	9.1%	11.0%	10.5%	10.0%	8.7%	9.8%	11.3%	9.2%	7.8%	8.2%	9.7%
Rural:	19.7%	21.4%	21.2%	22.5%	22.4%	20.0%	19.9%	21.9%	21.7%	21.4%	17.4%	20.7%	19.0%

Notes: Turnover defined as the percent of teachers who do not remain in the same district from one year to the next.

'Urban' districts are Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, and Matanuska-Susitna. 'Rural' districts are all other districts

'n/a' means data not available for that district that year.

Source: Ak Department of Education and Early Development Certified Staff Accounting Database; data analyzed by the Institute of Social and Economic Research, UAA

## Appendix B: Education Certification Programs at the University of Alaska

<b>Baccalaureate degrees with Certification</b> (Institutional Recommendations)	<b>UAA</b>	<b>UAF</b>	<b>UAS</b>	<b>Review/Approvals</b>
Early Childhood B.A. Pre-K-3	F			NAEYC, DEED
Elementary Education K-6	F	F, D		ACEI, DEED
Elementary B.A. K-8			F, D	ACEI, DEED
Special Education B.A.			D	New Fall 2012
Bachelor of Music in Music Education		F		NASM
<b>Undergraduate Certificates</b> (Institutional Recommendations)				
Undergraduate Certificate, K-12 Art,		F, D		NAEA
Undergraduate Certificate, Secondary 7-12		F, D		DEED and SPAs
<b>Post-Baccalaureate Certificates</b> (Institutional Recommendations)				
Early Childhood Pre-K-3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	F			NAEYC, DEED
Elementary Education K-6	F	F, D		ACEI, DEED
Secondary 7-12		F, D		DEED and SPAs
K-12 Art		F, D		NAEA
Special Education		F, D		CEC, DEED
<b>Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Certification</b> (Institutional Recommendations)				
Elementary Education MAT			F, D	ACEI, DEED
Secondary: Content Areas MAT, Distance	D	D	H	DEED
Special Education MAT			D	CEC, DEED
<b>Graduate Certificates</b> (Institutional Recommendations)				
Counseling		F, D		CACREP
Educational Leadership: Principal	D			ELCC, DEED
Educational Leadership: Superintendent	D			ELCC, DEED
Language Education (English Language Learner)	F			DEED
Special Education	D		D	CEC, DEED

<b>Master of Education (MEd) with Licensure (Institutional Recommendations)</b>	<b>UAA</b>	<b>UAF</b>	<b>UAS</b>	<b>Review/Approvals</b>
Counseling	F, D, H	F, D		CACREP
Educational Leadership (principal)	D		H	ELCC, DEED
Educational Leadership (superintendent)				ELCC, DEED
Educational Technology			D	ISTE ,DEED
Mathematics Education			D	DEED
Teaching and Learning	D			DEED
Early Childhood Special Education	F			DEC, DEC, DEED
Special Education	D	F, D	F, D	CEC, DEED
Reading Specialist			H	IRA, DEED
<b>Non-Licensure Programs</b>				
Early Childhood Development Undergraduate Certificate	F			NAEYC, DEED
Early Childhood Development Associate of Applied Science (AAS)	F			NAEYC, DEED
Early Childhood Special Education M.Ed.	F			DEC, DEC, DEED
Counseling Graduate Certificate	F, D, H			CACREP
M.Ed. Community Counseling		F, D		CACREP
M.Ed. in Online Innovation & Design		D		ISTE

**Type of Program Key:**

*F = Face to Face, D = Distance, H = Hybrid*

**Program Approvals Key:**

*ACEI Association for Childhood Education International*

*CACREP Council for the Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs*

*CEC Council for Exceptional Children*

*ELCC` Educational Leadership Constituent CouncilD*

*NAEA National Art Education Association*

*NAEYC National Association for the Education of Young Children*

*NASM National Association of Schools of Music*

*IRA International Reading Association*

*ISTE International Society for Technology in Education*

*SPAs Specialty Professional Associations*

**UAA Special Notes:**

1. Content areas of MAT at UAA include: Business Education, English/Language Arts, ESL, Family and Consumer Science, General Science, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Social Studies, Technology Education, and World Languages.
2. MAT, Graduate Certificate, and MEd programs at UAA are 100% available through distance delivery.
3. Baccalaureate and Post-Baccalaureate programs are 60-80% available through distance delivery.

**UAS Special Notes:**

1. All programs are available via hybrid or distance delivery models. Some program require short on-campus summer courses, but the elementary B.A. and MAT, Special Education B.A., MAT and M.Ed., Mathematics Education and Technology Education are 100% distance delivered.

## Appendix C: Progress Toward the Goals of the UA Teacher Education Plan

In 2010, the Deans of Education and provosts at the three MAUs developed the “University of Alaska Teacher Education Plan,” which laid out the following goals:

- A. Recruit and retain more students in education, particularly Alaska residents
- B. Increase program access through multiple delivery methods
- C. Enhance educator preparation programs in special education and in math and science teaching
- D. Conduct research to identify causes and propose solutions for education challenges in Alaska

The following is a brief overview of progress toward meeting those goals:

- A. Recruit and retain more students in Education, particularly Alaska residents
    - UA Schools and Colleges of Education have written several competitive grants to help support Alaska Natives who are interested in becoming teachers. These grants provide funding and other resources that help put Alaska citizens into Alaska’s schools and include the following:
      - US Department of Education funded teacher education programs
      - Preparing Indigenous Teachers and Administrators for Alaska Schools (PITAAS) program supports both teacher candidates and teachers who are working toward advanced degrees
      - The Village Teacher Program is focused on providing experienced Alaska Native teachers an opportunity to obtain advanced degrees and additional training for supporting students. 16 are preparing to become reading specialists and 11 to become district math specialists
      - A privately funded project with a cohort of paraprofessionals working toward teacher certification in Chevak, Alaska
      - National Science Foundation grants
      - Student teacher retention in arctic Alaska
      - Indigenous mathematics knowledge across three cultures
  - B. Increase program access through multiple delivery methods
    - All three MAU programs work closely with education students to guide them toward positive outcomes and to help ensure success in teacher education
    - Most programs are available with distance options so that students in rural and remote locations have access to teacher education programs
  - C. Enhance Educator preparation in special education and in math and science teaching
    - Between 2006 and 2011, the University of Alaska system more than doubled the annual number of special education graduates, from 29 in 2006 to 68 in 2011
    - In order to increase the number of graduates, UAA and UAS assisted UAF in developing a Special Education program, so that there are special education programs at all three MAUs
-

- To address issues of students moving between campuses, the special education faculty and the Deans from each MAU met to collaborate over (1) a common core of courses; (2) the same credit requirements for the post-baccalaureate certifications and master's degree programs, making it easier to transfer courses between programs, and (3) sharing supervision of clinical practice students to save on the cost of travel
  - A US Department of Education grant is currently funding 11 Native educators for the M.Ed. Mathematics Specialist degree.
- D. Conduct research to identify causes and propose solutions for Alaska's education challenges
- The UA College and Schools of Education are collaborating with the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR) to study a number of issues related to teacher preparation and retention in Alaska. CAEPR is conducting a study of recent graduates from the three MAUs to find out why some teacher education graduates are not working in the field
  - Deans at the 3 MAUs are working with CAEPR to design both an alumni and employer survey that will give us data for program improvement
  - CAEPR funds faculty across the three MAUs to conduct research on important education policy issues

The Teacher Education Plan is available online at:  
[http://www.alaska.edu/files/research/TeachPrepPlan\\_101112.pdf](http://www.alaska.edu/files/research/TeachPrepPlan_101112.pdf)

## Appendix D: University of Alaska Teacher Education Consortium

### September 25, 2012 Meeting Notes

In service of an overarching goal of improving UA teacher education programs, two meetings were held on September 25, 2012 to gather input from a wide range of stakeholders. The first meeting was a Listening Session that took place from 8:30 am until 10:00 am in the Lee Gorsuch Commons. Following the Listening Session, the Alaska Education Consortium met from 10:30 am – 2:00 pm in the same location.

This paper is a summary of both meetings and provides an interpretation of alignment between the clusters of input and the 2011 Alaska Teacher Education Plan.

#### Listening Session

The purpose of this session was to take comments from a variety of stakeholders in the teacher education system. Thirty-two participants attended the session in Anchorage, and 19 statewide participants called in. The comments were captured in two ways: the session was recorded, and Diane Hirshberg, Associate Professor, Institute of Social and Economic Research and invitee to the Alaska Teacher Education Consortium, took notes. Several leaders within the UA system were present to hear the comments: Deans of Education Allan Morotti, UAF, Deborah Lo, UAS, and Ed McLain, interim, UAA; UA President Patrick Gamble, UA Vice President for Academic Affairs Dana Thomas, UAF Provost Susan Henrichs, and UAA Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Elisha “Bear” Baker. Richard Caulfield, UAS Provost & Executive Dean, School of Career Education, convened the session.

The participants were asked to focus their comments on these four questions:

1. What are we doing well and should continue to do?
2. What can we do to improve our teacher preparation programs? How and where can we be better?
3. What are some challenges you face in teacher preparation?
4. Where should the priorities be for improvement?

Participant comments can be organized into these clusters:

- Mentoring for new teachers
- Dialogue, partnerships, and collaboration
- Recruitment of Alaska teachers and Native Alaska teachers
- Quality of new Alaska-educated teachers
- Timing of student teachers into schools
- Support strategies for Paraprofessionals
- Alaska Teacher Education Consortium

## Membership

President Gamble invited individuals representing key constituencies to serve as members of the Alaska Teacher Education Consortium. The following participated in the meeting: EED Commissioner Michael Hanley, Alaska School Board Executive Director Carl Rose who was represented by Joseph Reeves, Alaska Commission on Post-Secondary Education Executive Director Diane Barrans, Alaska Council of School Administrators Executive Director Bruce Johnson, President of NEA Alaska Ron Furher, and President of Sealaska Heritage Institute Rosita Worl. Al Tamagni, representing Alaska PTA, was unable to attend. Also participating as members of the Consortium were Deans of Education Allan Morotti, UAF, Deborah Lo, UAS, and Ed McLain, interim, UAA; UA Vice President for Academic Affairs Dana Thomas, UAF Provost Susan Henrichs, UAA Vice Chancellor and Provost Elisha “Bear” Baker, and Diane Hirshberg, Director, UAA Center for Alaska Education Policy Research. UAS Provost Richard Caulfield, UAS, convened the session.

## History

In 2010, under the direction of the President and Regents of the University of Alaska, the deans of the Schools and College of Education developed a teacher education plan. The University of Alaska Teacher Education Plan, published in January 2011, sets out the following goals:

- Recruit, retain, and graduate more students in education, particularly Alaska residents
- Increase program access through multiple delivery methods
- Enhance educator preparation programs in special education and in math and science teaching
- Conduct research to identify causes and propose solutions for education challenges in Alaska

As a step toward greater strategic alignment among key education leaders and organizations, this plan established the Alaska Teacher Education Consortium. According to the plan, the Consortium will provide a “forum to co-opt institutional expertise, leverage academic resources, and ensure that any strategies that come out of the UA Plan a fully coordinated with those of partner organizations.”

## Meeting Summary

The meeting began with a discussion with UA President Gamble who spoke about the context and direction of the Consortium’s work and the importance of teacher education to the mission of the University. His remarks are paraphrased in CAEPR’s meeting summary as follows:

- Growth goal has changed to internal quality
- Flat-funding status has helped focus on priorities, collaboration, and cooperation
- Good data makes a difference in choosing a good direction
- Take a risk on good ideas supported by research
- Show results in a cost-effective environment
- Teachers are one of the biggest factors in student success

During the working lunch, Dr. Kathryn Bertram, UA Statewide K-12 Outreach Director, presented a continuum of support available for prospective teachers, that includes Future Educators of Alaska, Alaska Teacher Placement, the Statewide Mentoring Project, and the Prepares program.

Following lunch, Consortium invitees were asked to focus on prioritizing UA's work in the area of

teacher preparation. Invitees were asked to identify the most important one or two things they would like to see UA do to improve teacher education programs. Their comments are grouped into four clusters and their specific suggestions are bulleted.

#### Rural and Native Education

- Stronger collaboration with indigenous organizations to change rural teacher preparation
- Increase variety, quality and quantity of rural internships (student teaching placements)
- Promote cross-cultural studies of Alaska Native culture, history, and legal status
- Use, expand, improve UA capacity to reach out to rural population through both face to face and enhanced distance media

#### UA Teacher Preparation Programs and Curriculum

- Integrate skills and training for using student performance data to enhance and improve content or pedagogy
- Integrate traditional knowledge systems into curricula; pair traditional values with western values
- Prepare more highly qualified teachers capable of teaching at multiple grade levels; develop skills in differentiation for multi-level classrooms
- Provide field experiences earlier in the program
- Provide comprehensive advisement throughout teacher education training; consider non-retention of slow-developing students
- Improve literacy teaching standards across all subject areas
- Ensure that each teacher education graduate is an expert in the K-12 standards and cultural standards she or he will be teaching
- Share instructional resources across MAUs

#### GER Engagement

- Work with colleagues in Arts & Sciences to strengthen content knowledge of students
- Engagement with K-12 schools
- Recruit and education more Alaska Native and other minority teachers
  - Increase UA visibility in K-12 schools as part of a recruitment strategy
  - Work with P-12 schools and Arts & Sciences to ensure preparedness
  - Explore ways to encourage P-12 schools to hire Alaska teacher graduates

As a follow-up question, each invitee was asked to identify an action that they or their organization could offer. Their responses follow:

- Research: provide best practices to support change efforts and provide research and evaluation of efforts on outcomes
- Help make a connection between the schools and the communities
- Provide structure through policies in recruitment, training, evaluation, and retention
- Find members who can provide the expertise
- Work with Alaska State Board of Education to share expectations and concerns; draft a teacher preparation plan
- Assist in developing state capacity for longitudinal data collection and analysis
- Incorporate educator development strategies through outreach and early awareness tools and

resources

- Build knowledge of Native community, culture, and history through partnership with schools and UA
- Provide honesty to students and advisors regarding progress or lack of progress
- Review and refine the partnerships in process; build state entities into that process
- Communicate with other campuses and colleges regarding services offered or in development
- Ensure that each K-12 graduate knows the recently adopted K-12 Standards
- Advocate for changes (as suggested in these bullets) within UA for teacher education; communicate UA efforts to legislators
- Advocate for resources within UA for teacher education
- Help ensure the input from this group is being pursued and that UA members report back on progress.

The Alaska Teacher Education Consortium concluded its meeting at 2:00 pm and agreed to these follow-up actions:

1. Teleconference call Monday, October 1, 4 pm – Rick Caulfield
2. Identify the status of Native paraprofessionals in SE schools – Rosita Worl
3. On behalf of ACPE, consider ways to strengthen secondary to postsecondary AKCIS content and advocate for content enhancements – Diane Barrans
4. Report out on teacher retention research – Diane Hirshberg

## Appendix E: Why Aren't They Teaching?

### A Study of Why Some University of Alaska Teacher Education Graduates Aren't in Classrooms

#### Introduction

Alaska Statute 14.40.190(b), passed as Senate Bill 241 in 2008, requires the University of Alaska (UA) Board of Regents to submit a report each regular session titled Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools that "describes the efforts of the university to attract, train, and retain qualified public school teachers." In 2012 this report documented that approximately 50% of UA initial teacher preparation graduates did not teach in Alaska public schools after completing their programs. Unfortunately, the data available could not tell us the reasons why so many graduates were not employed as teachers. In response to legislators' questions about this, the three UA Education deans (with support from the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research) made a commitment to conduct a 2012 research project to understand why graduates of UA initial teacher preparation programs did or did not teach in Alaska public schools after completing their programs. This project was conducted in response to that commitment.

#### Existing Research

There is a lack of research on reasons why initial teacher preparation graduates are not teaching across the nation. Much of the current research addresses retention issues of new teachers rather than initial employment of them. However, media outlets throughout the United States (Collins, 2011; Eaton, 2011; Hamilton, 2011; Roberts, 2011) and other countries (Dedyna, 2011; *Fairfax NZ News*, 2012; Fergus, 2012; Lepkowska, 2011) report teacher hiring freezes, school budget cuts, teacher layoffs, oversupply of teacher graduates or oversupply in low-demand areas, and stiff competition for few positions as the reasons new teachers cannot find jobs.

Some recent research has been conducted with regard to oversupply. Sawchuk (2013) explored the potential effects and policy issues related to an oversupply of new teachers, particularly elementary teachers, and discussed the supply and demand mismatch. He stated, "data, while imprecise, suggest that some states are producing far more new teachers at the elementary level than will be able to find jobs in their respective states--even as districts struggle to find enough recruits in other certification fields" (p. 1). Similarly, Ontario College of Teachers Transition to Teaching Study (2012) found "that the years of oversupply of teachers in Ontario negatively affected new teacher job outcomes more and more each year," and "each new group of teachers has entered an increasingly competitive job market" (p. 3).

In addition, a U.S. Census Bureau Report (2007) explored reasons that adults with bachelor's degrees might not be working<sup>5</sup>. Respondents who specified a reason other than retirement were most likely to cite taking care of children/others (35%), going to school (12%), chronic illness/disability (10.3%), inability to find work (6.6%), and no interest in working (5.8%). Other

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<sup>5</sup> Adults aged 20 to 64, not working, 2004

reasons included temporary injury or illness (2%) and pregnancy/childbirth (1.5%). These reasons mirror what we had heard anecdotally from Alaska-prepared teachers who were not working.

### Methodology

To look more systematically at why some UA-prepared teachers are not employed in the classroom, we surveyed recent graduates about their employment and interviewed a sample of those who reported they were not teaching. The interview sample was chosen to include graduates of all UA initial teacher education program areas. We received 113 survey responses (a 27% response rate) and interviewed 21 of those respondents. We also interviewed human resource personnel who represented the five districts hiring the largest number of UA graduates.

### Results - Online Graduate Survey

Of the 113 respondents to our survey, 90% applied for a teaching certificate upon completion of their program. The 10% who did not apply were not seeking a teaching job and cited travel, pursuit of other interests, acceptance or continuation of employment in nonteaching jobs, lack of available teaching jobs, or simply no desire to teach.

Answer	Response	%
employed as a teacher	47	41%
working as a substitute teacher	33	29%
working in some other education job	17	15%
working in a job outside of education	12	11%
not working	4	4%
Total	113	100%

The fall immediately following their graduation, 95% of our respondents were employed. More than 4 out of 5 respondents (84%) worked in some type of education job, although only 41% were teachers (see table below). Of those respondents working in education, 14% worked in early childhood (pre-K) settings, 64% worked in elementary (K-6), and 66% in middle/high school settings.

About 72% of the 107 who were employed worked in an Alaska school, 10% worked in a school outside of Alaska, 5% worked in a childcare organization, and 13% were employed by some other business or organization within or outside Alaska. Once we account for unemployed graduates, those working part time, those working in non-teaching positions, and those working outside Alaska public schools, just 34 of the 113 graduates (30%) were working full-time as teachers in Alaska public schools the fall after their graduation.

The most frequently cited reasons for choosing to teach outside Alaska (10% of respondents) were family and personal issues, such as relocation of a spouse for work or education. Two respondents

indicated they had no desire to live in Alaska and another wanted a change in scenery and climate. Two respondents indicated they were unable to find employment in Alaska, and two pursued international teaching opportunities.

We asked the 60% of our respondents (68 of 113) who were not employed as teachers the fall following graduation about their job searches (67 of the 68 responded to these questions). More than 70% of them (48) had applied for a teaching job immediately after graduation. The 19 who did not apply most frequently cited going back to school for advanced education, lack of job availability, and uncertainty about teaching in the current educational system. Other reasons, such as staying home to have a baby, needing a break, transferring with the military, accepting a position in a private school, and waiting on an institutional recommendation and teacher certificate were given by just one or two respondents. About half of those not employed as teachers (9 out of 19) later searched for a teaching job.

Answer	Response	%
Anchorage School District	21	44%
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District	9	19%
Mat-Su Borough School District	10	21%
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	8	17%
Juneau School District	10	21%
Other Alaska public schools	8	17%
Schools outside Alaska	10	21%
Alaska non-public schools	3	6%

Of the 48 who did apply for teaching jobs immediately following graduation, more than 40% (21) applied to the Anchorage School District. About 20% (9-10) each applied to Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, the Juneau School District, the Mat-Su Borough School District, and schools outside Alaska. A little less than 20% (8) each applied to the Kenai Borough School District and other school districts in Alaska. Only about 6% (3) applied to Alaska non-public schools. Of these 48, 3 got a teaching job, 43 continued to try to get one, and only 2 stopped looking for teaching jobs.

We asked all those who had searched for a teaching job either immediately after graduation or later about their willingness to relocate. Of those 58 graduates, almost 60% were not able to relocate because they needed to stay in their home community. Of the approximately 40% (25 respondents) who were willing to relocate, 10 indicated they would teach in another state, 5 cited anywhere in Alaska, 5 indicated southcentral, and 2 indicated southeast. Six others indicated specified and unspecified caveats on other locations in Alaska. One expressed interest in relocating to a foreign country. Most respondents (23 of 25) also identified places they were unwilling to relocate. While 3 said they would not be willing to leave Alaska, 15 said they would not move to some or all of rural Alaska. Family/personal reasons and environment (including weather, lifestyle, and teaching/living

conditions) were the major reasons respondents would not be willing to relocate to specific areas. Out of the 68 who did not get a teaching job the fall immediately following graduation, 54 gave us one or more reasons for why they were not hired. By far the most frequent answer was competition, lack of jobs, or both, cited by almost two-thirds (35 of the 54) of our respondents. Seven were unwilling to relocate and a few (2 to 4 for each reason) cited lack of experience, lack of interviewing skills, moving, having a baby, and didn't apply.

### **Results - Interviews with Non-teaching Graduates**

We interviewed 21 of our survey respondents who were not employed as teachers the fall immediately following graduation to explore why this was the case in more depth. All UA initial teacher preparation programs were represented.

Reflecting the answers above, about 80% (17) indicated there were limited teaching job opportunities, which included comments related to no openings, no offers, district budget constraints, and competition/lack of experience. Adding to those answers, one-third (7) listed other opportunities, such as travel, employment in nonteaching jobs, and family as reasons. Third, slightly less than 20% (4) expressed uncertainty about teaching. (Percentages do not equal 100 because many respondents provided multiple reasons.)

Two-thirds of those interviewed were substitute teaching, with only two indicating they were not working with children at all. Those working with children, but not as substitute teachers, cited such activities as volunteering (reading at school events and instructing rock climbing and pottery classes), working outside the home (Head Start, paraprofessional, after-school program, special education TA and Indian education tutor), and working with children in a home setting. Six of the graduates were employed in jobs that do not require teacher certification. These included research assistant, preparatory college course instructor, paraprofessional, librarian, after-school program coordinator, and physical therapy assistant. A majority of those interviewed (13) indicated that they were still seeking teacher employment, most of whom (11) used district web sites as a job resource. Other resources they used included Alaska Teacher Placement (4), word of mouth (2), substitute teaching, job fairs, Craigslist, Alaska Department of Education and Early Development website, ALEXsys, and a Facebook page maintained by a graduate cohort group.

When asked what UA could do to assist in their search for employment, the most frequent response (8 of the 21) was nothing or "I don't know." Two graduates recommended resume writing help, and one each recommended help with classroom management, assessment, interviewing practice, cover letter writing, job hunting protocol (who to contact), information about job fairs and job openings, clarification of the certification process, and honesty about the bleak job opportunities.

### **Results - Key Informant Interviews**

To gain an additional perspective on UA graduates, we interviewed human resource personnel from the five Alaska school districts that hire the largest number of UA graduates (Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, and Mat-Su). These key informants have general knowledge of the quality of teachers hired by their districts. When asked how well prepared they found UA graduates, two were

complimentary, two were neutral, and one was uncomplimentary. Paraphrased statements are included below.

- UA graduates pass screening interviews at a higher rate than the general population.
- We have had great success with UA graduates. Very few need assistance due to poor teacher evaluations.
- UA graduates are as prepared as well as any other traditional university program. There is no significant advantage to hiring a UA graduate.
- It depends on the graduate. The quality is more influenced by their preparation throughout life rather than what an education program provides.
- UA graduates are below average compared to other institutions.

Later in the interview, one of the neutral key informants indicated that the district had always been pleased with UA graduates with only a few exceptions, and thought that student teaching in the district made the transition to teaching comfortable for UA graduates.

Key informants reported both consistent strengths and weaknesses of UA graduates. Strengths included understanding the environment and diverse student populations of the district, role of the general education teacher working with ELL students, classroom management, assessment, and the connection between instruction and assessment. Other strengths cited were a passion for teaching, love of students, interest and passion for being in education, and knowledge of the state and the district in which they have applied. One key informant indicated that there were no consistent strengths that set UA graduates apart. Weaknesses included preparation in special education, instructional practices, literacy integration at the secondary level, and the role of the general education teacher in working with special education students. One informant reported that UA graduates seemed to have an “inherent belief” that they should automatically get jobs in the local district, and he conveyed that such an entitlement attitude was a consistent weakness. Two key informants indicated that there were no consistent weaknesses, but one of these indicated more preparation in dealing with diverse populations would be beneficial.

When asked if they shared their perceptions of graduates with UA personnel, two indicated little or no interaction with the university closest to them, one indicated participation on a statewide committee that included representation from all UA college/schools of education, one served on a college advisory board, and another had regular communication with the local campus.

Finally, key informants were asked if there were anything else UA should know related to their experiences with interviewing and hiring graduates. Two of the informants had no response. Responses by the other three informants are paraphrased below.

- UA graduates are quite prepared. The regular meetings with university students and faculty are helpful. We discuss what we look for in graduates and what is important during interviews.
- One of the larger school districts in Alaska hires the best candidates before other smaller districts have an opportunity to view them.

- Graduates from the UAA campus were late submitting their applications, which caused them to miss some job opportunities.
- The overall quality of UAS graduates appears to be less than that of UAA and UAF. The number of eligible candidates from UAS has decreased over time.
- UA has done a much better job of processing institutional recommendations more quickly.

## Discussion

The results of our research held few surprises. Our experience with the UA initial teacher preparation programs, with teacher candidates and with colleagues in the districts that hire most of our graduates had indicated that UA teacher education graduates, on the whole, are prepared to teach and want to work as teachers. We knew that some graduates did not go into teaching because they left the state, had children, or could not find a job in their home district and were unable to relocate. Our surveys and interviews confirmed both that UA teacher graduates were prepared to teach, and that the reasons they did not mirrored those we had heard anecdotally.

This raises the question of why so many of our graduates don't find employment, yet districts import so many teachers from out of state. Looking at new-to-district hires in 2012, we see that just 23% of new hires for teaching positions in the state's five largest districts<sup>6</sup> were from out of state, compared with 70% of hires in the remaining 48 districts. And while over half of total district hires in the five largest districts were new teachers already in Alaska, just 3% of hires in other districts were new teachers in Alaska. So teachers looking for jobs in urban Alaska can't find them, and districts looking to hire teachers for rural Alaska have to look outside the state.

	Big 5 Districts			All Other Districts		
	FTE of New District Hires					
	Experienced	New Teacher	Total	Experienced	New Teacher	Total
Alaskan	87	229	316	126	12	138
New to State	47	45	92	135	190	325
Total	134	274	408	261	202	463
	Percent of New District Hires					
Alaskan	21%	56%	77%	27%	3%	30%
New to State	12%	11%	23%	29%	41%	70%
Total	33%	67%	100%	56%	44%	100%

Source: EED Certified Staff Data, FY12

In addition to this place mismatch between available job locations and UA graduates willing to teach in those locations, there is some subject mismatch as well. As the table below shows, the same number of elementary education respondents secured jobs as teachers as secondary respondents;

<sup>6</sup> Anchorage, Fairbanks, Matanuska-Susitna, Kenai, and Juneau

but nearly 40% more of our respondents were prepared as elementary teachers than as secondary teachers<sup>7</sup>. Likewise, although there were only seven special educators among our respondents, over 50% of them had teaching jobs the fall after graduation.

	Elementary		Secondary		Regular education*		Special education	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Teaching	19	35%	19	48%	41	37%	4	58%
Substitute teaching	18	33%	10	25%	33	31%		0%
Other education job	12	22%	4	10%	16	15%	1	14%
Non-education job	3	6%	4	10%	11	10%	1	14%
Not working	2	4%	3	7%	5	7%	1	14%
Total	54	100%	40	100%	106	100%	7	100%

\*Includes early childhood and K-12.

National and Alaska researchers have long documented that teacher shortages are both location and subject-specific (NCREL, 2000; McDiarmid, 2003), and these data are in line with those findings. While UA graduates are generally prepared to teach, there are some graduates who are less prepared, as reflected by one of our key informants. The largest factor, though, seems to be that too many graduates are competing for the limited positions in the state’s largest districts, and too few are able to relocate to rural and remote schools where districts need more applicants. Another factor in graduates’ difficulty finding jobs is that too many UA students are choosing elementary education, and too few are choosing hard-to-fill areas such as special education, secondary math, and secondary science, a common supply-and-demand mismatch issue faced by many states (Sawchuk, 2013).

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<sup>7</sup> Our respondents mirror UA teacher education graduates very closely on this measure. From AY 2007-2008 to AY 2011-2012, UA prepared about 50% more elementary teachers than secondary – an average of 117 per year elementary and 77 per year secondary.

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## Appendix F: SB 241 legislation

### AN ACT

1 Relating to a report to the legislature on teacher preparation, retention, and recruitment by the  
2 Board of Regents of the University of Alaska; and providing for an effective date.

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \* **Section 1.** AS 14.40.190 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

5 (b) In addition to the report required under (a) of this section, the Board of  
6 Regents shall prepare and present to the legislative committees having jurisdiction  
7 over education an annual report, not later than the 30th legislative day of each regular  
8 session of the legislature, titled "Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools" that  
9 describes the efforts of the university to attract, train, and retain qualified public  
10 school teachers. The report must include an outline of the university's current and  
11 future plans to close the gap between known teacher employment vacancies in the  
12 state and the number of state residents who complete teacher training. The information  
13 reported under this subsection may also include short-term and five-year strategies

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1 with accompanying fiscal notes and outcome measures.

2 \* **Sec. 2.** AS 14.40.190(b) is repealed and reenacted to read:

3 (b) In addition to the report required under (a) of this section, the Board of  
4 Regents shall prepare and present to the legislative committees having jurisdiction  
5 over education a biennial report, not later than the 30th legislative day of the first  
6 session of each legislature, titled "Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools" that  
7 describes the efforts of the university to attract, train, and retain qualified public  
8 school teachers. The report must include an outline of the university's current and  
9 future plans to close the gap between known teacher employment vacancies in the  
10 state and the number of state residents who complete teacher training. The information  
11 reported under this subsection may also include short-term and five-year strategies  
12 with accompanying fiscal notes and outcome measures.

13 \* **Sec. 3.** AS 14.40.250 is amended to read:

14 **Sec. 14.40.250. Regents to act as trustees and administer money or**  
15 **property.** The Board of Regents may receive, manage, and invest money or other real,  
16 personal, or mixed property for the purpose of the University of Alaska, its  
17 improvement or adornment, or the aid or advantage of students or faculty, and, in  
18 general, may act as trustee on behalf of the University of Alaska for any of these  
19 purposes. The regents shall prepare a written report, in accordance with  
20 **AS 14.40.190(a)** [AS 14.40.190], as to the administration and disposition of money  
21 received under this section.

22 \* **Sec. 4.** AS 37.25.010(d) is amended to read:

23 (d) The University of Alaska shall, in the report required under  
24 **AS 14.40.190(a)** [AS 14.40.190], report the amount of university receipts received in  
25 one year and expended in the succeeding fiscal year.

26 \* **Sec. 5.** Section 2 of this Act takes effect July 1, 2012.

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